

the best and is forging ahead to a position of leadership. Not that we would decry the leadership of the east. But that we would stand on our own scientific feet and no longer say, "All good is from abroad." We must not forget that "Wherever MacDonald sits, there is the head of the table."

Medical science on the Pacific Coast is turning out work of which it need not be ashamed. In quantity and in quality it bears analysis. It is setting a pace in economics and sociology that is second to none in the country. Let us realize that we have something of value here and let us build up a Pacific school of scientific medicine which shall put us at the head of the scientific table.

MINERS' CONSUMPTION

Fibroid phthisis, or miners' consumption, is not infrequently observed in California, either in men engaged at the time in hard rock mining operations, or in those who formerly have followed this trade elsewhere. Until the last few years the condition received but scant attention and was but poorly understood. As the result of an investigation covering three years in the Butte district, and conducted by A. J. Lanza, of the Federal Public Health Service, and Daniel Harrington, of the Bureau of Mines, miners' consumption is now better understood and its hazards more easily avoided.

Lanza and Harrington summarize our knowledge of the disease somewhat as follows: Lung disease among workers in hard-rock mines has been recognized as extremely prevalent. Miners' phthisis is caused by the mechanical irritation of particles of rock dust containing free silica. This dust is dangerous in proportion to the amount of free silica or other hard, sharp, insoluble matter in it. Particles of such dust small enough to enter and remain in the lungs measure less than ten microns in longest dimension. The disease is strictly of mechanical irritative production, and represents an extensive scarring of the lungs, slow in development, and neither contagious nor infectious. The time necessary for the development of the pathologic lesions is dependent on the amount of dust exposure, the length and steadiness of such exposure, and to other concomitant surroundings in the working conditions.

Miners' consumption itself may be the direct cause of disability and death, but more often it predisposes to secondary infections of all sorts, and few escape such infection in the long run. Tuberculosis is not infrequently a sequel, and is more apt to develop where housing and living conditions are favorable to its spread in the soil already prepared. Pneumonia, too, is common.

The danger from tuberculosis is always present, and a tuberculous miner is, of course, a menace to his family and associates. If the victim of miners' phthisis leaves his underground employment, the disease tends to recovery if the process is not too advanced, but the hazard from intercurrent tuberculosis or pneumonia is very great even from the first.

Proper protection against the irritative forms of hard-rock dust will prevent this disease. Its treatment naturally consists of removal from the dust hazard to open air occupation, and beyond this is purely symptomatic.

COMMERCIAL VITAMIN PREPARATIONS

It seems necessary to call attention to the considerable number of commercial preparations of vitamins now being advertised, and with reference to which doctors are being extensively circularized. Vitamins are necessary articles of diet. Deprivation of vitamins leads to disturbed physiology and, if continued, to definite disease. At least three types of vitamins are recognized and few, if any, single preparations or foods contain all of them. But we must not forget that vitamins are unstable, illy-defined chemical substances of still doubtful nature and properties, and that their isolation is attended with difficulty, and their standardization is thus far unsatisfactory, to say the least. Moreover, under ordinary conditions an abundant supply of vitamins is secured from a usual dietary, and no specific addition is necessary. Apply all of these facts to the widely-advertised preparations now being exploited, and then see if you are helping the cause of science or the interests of your patient by prescribing indiscriminately substances which are lauded by commercial interests. As was said in these columns recently in regard to commercial claims for emetin preparations, we do not want or relish having our therapeutic science served up to us by drug houses. We want to get our knowledge from unprejudiced scientific sources. We insist that drug houses shall be guarantors of quality alone, and that they shall not be advocates of their preparations to the extent of supplying us with pseudo-scientific literature, which too often leads the unwary doctor astray. Be circumspect in your use of vitamin preparations, and do not allow yourself to be capitalized through a popular fad for the benefit of the seller of doubtful preparations.

DEATH NOTICE INCORRECT

The Journal recently published a death notice which, like one of Mark Twain, was evidently "greatly exaggerated." In the San Diego County Bulletin for March 4, 1921, occurred this paragraph, "Dr. H. P. Wilson . . . has also joined the great majority." It seems, however, that the good doctor is very much alive, and we are delighted to learn that the "great majority" must refer to our friends in San Diego County. May the doctor live to serve for many a long year yet.